

**TESTIMONY OF
SUSAN FITZSIMONS, RN, Ph.D.
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF
PATIENT SERVICES
YALE NEW HAVEN HOSPITAL
BEFORE THE
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

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**SB 1191, An Act Concerning Public Disclosure Of Hospital Staffing
Levels For Patient Safety**

Good afternoon Senator Handley, Representative Sayers, and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Susan Fitzsimons and I am the Senior Vice President of Patient Services at Yale New Haven Hospital. I am also on the board of the Organization of Nurse Executives of Connecticut (ONE-CT) and serve as chair of its Legislative Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to testify on **SB 1191, An Act Concerning Public Disclosure Of Hospital Staffing Levels For Patient Safety**.

This bill calls for hospitals to post information on patient care units on a monthly basis that articulates the ratio of nurses and other hospital staff to patients and methods used to determine and adjust staffing levels.

As a nurse executive I have accountability for providing safe, quality patient care through the use of careful analysis and staff input, as well as consideration of such things as productivity guidelines, nationally recognized standards of care, and patient satisfaction. This work is complex, draws upon a team with a broad range of nursing expertise, and is of the highest priority in our provision of patient care. It is carried out constantly throughout each day as conditions affecting patient care are evaluated and staffing levels are adjusted accordingly.

A monthly posting of staffing ratios would not reflect the importance of this work or the realities of staffing levels. It would simply add an administrative burden without impacting the quality of care delivered or communicating useful information to the public.

Attention regarding nurse staffing should be on passage of legislation that will be instrumental in addressing the nursing shortage, which is of significant concern to nurse executives in Connecticut. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has reported that Connecticut will experience a deficit of over 22,000 nurses by the year 2020. We know that we are turning qualified applicants away from schools of nursing in

the state because of faculty shortages and other capacity issues. We are working with our colleagues in nursing education using a variety of models to help bolster their capacity to provide quality clinical experiences for students, and we are engaged in programs to create supportive work environments for nurses. Through ONE-CT and other affiliations, nurse executives are collaborating to promote initiatives that will address the developing and projected severe shortage of nurses in this state. What is our hospital staffing challenge today will become the state's crisis tomorrow without focused attention and state action. The support of this Committee in ensuring the creation this year of a workforce planning database through the implementation of an on-line licensure renewal process for nurses and other health professionals, and in recommending state funding to support nurse faculty development, will be instrumental in addressing Connecticut's nurse staffing issue.

To conclude, from my perspective as a hospital nurse executive and member of the nursing leadership community in Connecticut, I believe that passage of SB 1191 will not be beneficial to patients, but aggressive action to address the nursing shortage will. I am sure that my colleagues would welcome the opportunity to provide information and assistance to members of the legislature regarding ways to address the nursing shortage.

Thank you for consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions that you may have.